

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 12, 2013

Agenda Item: 2014 – 2015 Hunting Season Dates

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

Season dates are currently adopted biennially for all game species. This happens every other winter with adoptions in December and final adoptions in February. These dates are a combination of fixed dates (mountain grouse season Sept. 1 opener) and “formula” dates (general deer and elk is defined by counting backwards five weeks from Thanksgiving Sunday). For the “formula” dates, there is an annual change due to the progression of the calendar from one year to another. That means at least one day’s difference and, periodically, nearly a full week. In some cases, these annual movements can place season dates in conflict with public expectations or traditions. Some specific areas have exceptions to these general statewide dates by species. Those exceptions are also proposed again for 2014 and 2015 or are proposed to be different within individual species-specific proposals.

There are no proposed changes in date definitions from 2012/13. The proposed 2014 and 2015 two-day statewide youth deer hunting season will overlap the last Thursday and Friday of the statewide archery season, rather than occurring on the Thursday and Friday prior to the general opener. This is a function of the definition for MEA training dates and is unavoidable. MEA dates are set and unchangeable through 2019.

Public Involvement Process & Results

In addition to public comment at the Dec. 12 Commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 24, 2014. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb.13, 2014 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2013 (status quo). If no change is adopted, that would result in seasons opening and closing on different weekdays (e.g. open on a Thursday rather than a Saturday).

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals have been included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 12 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the 2014 and 2015 Hunting Seasons Dates as proposed by FWP.